



Health Committee – Introduced

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Tanning Ban Position By Melbourne

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Position Statement:

SIYAC supports the proposed legislation banning minors from using indoor tanning beds.

Position

It is the position of the State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council, the voice of Iowa's youth, that legislation banning those under the age of 18 from using tanning facilities that emit ultraviolet radiation be enacted. This legislation would improve the health of our state, especially among young adults, because it also calls for increased warnings about the dangers of tanning throughout the facilities. Currently there are no restrictions in place for minors in the state of Iowa. This puts Iowa behind 41 other states that already have laws in place.

Rationale

Many young adults are unaware of the risks of tanning indoors, believing it is safer than lying out in the sun. This is false, because the radiation doses emitted by a tanning bed are 12 times more powerful than that of the sun, and prolonged exposure can cause irreversible DNA damage. With so many people viewing tanning beds as a safe alternative to sun exposure, raising awareness on this issue is crucial to the health of our citizens.

SIYAC is just one of many groups in support of this bill, along with the Iowa Youth Congress, Iowa Medical Society, American Cancer Society, and the Iowa Cancer Consortium (ICC). The ICC has a five-year cancer plan endorsed by Governor Branstad to reduce cancer rates in Iowa. The risk of developing skin cancer rises exponentially for those who start tanning at a young age. An analysis by the Skin Cancer Foundation determined that those who start tanning before age 35 see a 59% increased risk of getting melanoma later in life. Tanning is found to have the same addictive effects on teenagers as cigarettes and alcohol, and it is just as dangerous.

We recognize that those opposed to this legislation may hesitate because it appears to be restricting a business. However, there are alternative options to using ultraviolet-emitting tanning beds that these businesses also offer, such as sunless tanning lotion and spray-on tans. The teenage market for cigarettes has been restricted due to their cancer-causing effects, and the same must be done for tanning. The future health of many young Iowans depends on it.

Recommended Action

Indoor tanning restrictions have been proposed before in the state of Iowa. As advocates for the wellbeing of our state's young people, SIYAC believe that this is the moment to finally address the issue of tanning bed use among youth and its implications. We ask that the General Assembly consider supporting this legislation during the 2015 legislative session.